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ABSTRACT

After briefly introducing the effective schools movement, chapter 1 of this monograph describes Ron Edmonds' criterion for effective schools (poor and minority children should score well on standard achievement tests in proportions equal to those attained by children in the dominant culture) and his five basic characteristics (a strong, improvement-minded principal, high expectations, an orderly environment, focus on academic skills, and monitoring of student progress). Chapter 2 outlines major criticisms of the effective schools movement, such as its (1) simplistic formula; (2) overblown research claims; (3) promises of quick results; (4) limited research population; (5) focus on narrow educational outcomes; (6) promotion of authoritarian techniques; and (7) overemphasis on test scores. As the next chapter shows, the "principal principle" has been endorsed widely without considering underlying research limitations. Overreliance on the strong principal as a solution to school problems ignores more recent research findings and reflects the current top-down school organization inhibiting change and improvement. Contradictory evidence about the leadership factor demands a reexamination of the term "effectiveness." Recent research favors a multidimensional definition of the principal's role. In the absence of comprehensive assessment tools and longitudinal studies, policymakers should be cautious about accepting instructional leadership as a consistent correlate of effective schools. Chapter 4 offers four recommendations addressing implications for preparing future administrators. Included are 122 references. (MLH)

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A REVIEW OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS RESEARCH AS IT RELATES TO EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS

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A REVIEW OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS RESEARCH AS IT RELATES TO EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS

UCEA MONOGRAPH SERIES

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FOREWORD

The authors of this edition of the UCEA Monograph Series have provided a valuable perspective on the effective schools research. Professors Grady, Wayson, and Zirkel give a concise overview of essential elements of the research on effective schools and conduct a critical evaluation of the literature on the subject. A second important feature of the Monograph is its emphasis upon research on the leadership factor of the principal with respect to effective schools. The sections on "Effective Schools" and "Effective Principals" are tightly written examinations of the two keys to the topic. Last, the authors provide recommendations for the preparation of school administrators.

Readers of the UCEA Monograph Series should find this review to be timely and useful. Professors Grady, Wayson, and Zirkel have skillfully blended questions of theory and practice regarding the research on effective schools into a comprehensive review.

Frederick C. Wendel, Editor
Miles T. Bryant, Co-Editor

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
August, 1988

Chapter 1

Background

Although the effective schools movement fueled a popular response to calls for excellence, the movement began long before the school reforms of the 1980s. Educational researchers (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Venesky & Winfield, 1979; Weber, 1971) and practitioners commenced studies to determine why some schools were more effective than other schools serving the same types of children. Original effective schools advocates claimed that the Coleman Report (1966) and Jencks' (1972) subsequent study showed that schools *were doing little* to help children whose homes had not already educated them and were commonly misinterpreted (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Cohen, 1983; Edmonds, 1982) to mean that schools *could do nothing* to change what socioeconomic factors and homelife had determined. Of course, they found that many schools were positively influencing learning, especially in academic areas in which school personnel were conscientiously trying to make a difference. Those schools were called "effective" schools, and their characteristics were documented and publicized as the factors which could promote effectiveness in other schools (Clark & Astuto, 1985; Clark, Lotto & McCarthy, 1980).

The effective schools movement is based on three main assumptions: (1) some schools are unusually effective in teaching poor and minority children basic skills as measured by standardized tests; (2) successful schools exhibit characteristics that are correlated with their success and are within the domain of educators to manipulate; and (3) the characteristics of successful schools provide a basis for improving other schools (Bickel, 1983).

The Search for an Effective Schools Formula

Ron Edmonds, while an assistant superintendent of schools in New York City, had piloted effective programs in fifteen schools there. His criterion for an effective school was that *poor and minority children scored well on standardized achievement*

tests in proportions equal to those attained by children from the dominant culture. He attributed success in those schools to five basic characteristics. Edmonds inspired school personnel, policy makers, and funding agencies alike to implement his ideas in a number of cities.

Edmonds insisted that schools could teach all children if that is what they really wanted to do. He asserted that schools could accomplish that objective if they developed these characteristics or factors (Edmonds, 1982):

1. A strong principal dedicated to improving achievement.
2. Staff members who exhibit high expectations that no child will fall below minimum levels of achievement.
3. An orderly environment in which teaching and learning can take place.
4. School practices that show that students' acquisition of basic and higher order academic skills will take precedence over all other activity.
5. The staff (usually the principal) monitors students' progress, and the instruction they receive, provides feedback to staff and students, then guides and directs efforts to correct any shortcomings that appear.

Propelled by his eloquence and commitment, Edmonds' model became popular and was adopted readily because it promised success in situations where others offered little hope. Its few simple guidelines conformed with common sense. Some school administrators and boards saw Edmonds' model as a way to educate minority children without desegregating schools, and Edmonds' credentials and demeanor inspired school personnel without threatening school board members. Educators, particularly in urban systems, saw the guidelines proposed by effective schools proponents as a strategy to improve test scores, or at least to show they were trying to improve test scores, of all children. "Effective Schools" became a recognizable movement in education. A number of researchers, developers, and entrepreneurs joined the movement, many for the purpose of giving technical assistance to school personnel who were trying to implement the guidelines.

Other researchers and developers formulated variations on Edmonds' five factors (Eubanks & Levine, 1983; Firestone & Herriott, 1982; Shoemaker & Fraser, 1981; Stedman, 1985). For example, the Ohio Department of Education (1981) focuses on seven characteristics of effective schools to guide pilot projects and to give direction to a popular principals' institute. These included a sense of mission; strong building level leadership; high expectations for students and staff; frequent monitoring of students progress; a positive, orderly learning climate; sufficient opportunity for learning; and parent/community involvement.

Despite advocates' claims, research findings on the effects of these characteristics are insufficient to explain why some schools are more productive or effective than others. Edmonds (1979) himself had cautioned that the point at the outset was to make clear that no one model explained school effectiveness for the poor or any other social class subset. Similarly, in their review of the early research, Purkey and Smith (1983) warned that blanket acceptance would be dangerous.

Pointing to differences between and among the findings and conclusions of the same research, D'Amico (1982) cautioned that there were, as yet, no recipes for effective schools. Responding to D'Amico, one of the reviewed researchers (Lezotte, 1982) concluded that more research was necessary before the work could ever hope to meet the standards of a recipe.

Chapter
2

Critical Evaluation of the Effective Schools Formula

The effective schools movement has been criticized on several dimensions. Such criticisms are presented as caveats to those whose attempts to create effective schools are guided mainly by the literature of the effective schools movement.

1. *The formula is too simplistic.* Reducing the characteristics of truly effective schools to a brief list obscures what really happens to make a good school (Murphy, 1985; Ralph & Fennessey, 1983; Stedman, 1985, 1988). Reductionism often fosters slapdash attempts to install inadequately understood innovations that help children very little while eroding both staff and community commitment to real improvements.

2. *The research is not as clear as is claimed.* Proponents often say, "Research now shows what needs to be done to create effective schools." Such overblown claims to success have not been sufficiently substantiated. The research is spotty and does not support any significant relationship between any one of the characteristics and improved achievement. Research does indicate that complex and delicate interactions among people, places, and resources, when combined with commitment, caring, knowledge, and energy, *may* produce good schools. Multivariate, longitudinal studies designed to trace causation are virtually nonexistent. Even if the various researchers had agreed on the salient five factors as identified and articulated by Edmonds (1982), which is not clearly the case, (Neufeld, Farrar & Miles, 1983; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Rowan, Bossert & Dwyer, 1983), Edmonds himself warned that these characteristics had been shown only to be correlates, not causes, of improved school achievement. Other reviewers

have expressed similar cautions from both legal (Yudof, 1985; Zirkel, 1987) and educational (Ralph & Fennessey, 1983) perspectives.

3. *Proponents promise quick results.* Many entrepreneurs have rushed to sell their services or products that promise to create effective schools (Murphy, 1985). Many educators, having experienced only a brief workshop, begin an effective schools program but make no changes in relationships, purposes, or processes. Effective schools—like most substantial human enterprises—grow over a period of time, through constant attention to changing conditions, and painstaking maintenance of complex processes and relationships (Murphy, 1985; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Young & Achilles, 1985).

4. *The research has been primarily limited to elementary schools in urban systems with large populations of disadvantaged students.* The research particularly appealed to large urban school systems when school boards were seeking some alternative to desegregating schools. The effective schools characteristics were more easily developed in elementary schools because elementary schools traditionally are child-centered and concentrate on basic skills (Cuban, 1984; Farrar, Neufeld & Miles, 1983; Rowan, Bossert & Dwyer, 1983). Based on the assumption or misconception of generalizability, some systems have begun programs in high schools, junior high schools, or middle schools (Clark, Lotto & McCarthy, 1980; Rowan, Bossert & Dwyer, 1983).

5. *The programs focus upon narrow educational outcomes.* Focusing upon standardized achievement test results rigidifies the curriculum and reduces teachers' creativity and initiative while fostering impersonal and inflexible relationships (Cuban, 1983, Rowan, Bossert & Dwyer, 1983; Stedman, 1987, 1988). Such a focus can influence the adoption of unexciting and ineffective curriculum materials and practices and lead to practices that sap children's enthusiasm for learning. These practices may reduce learning, particularly among able students, and can actually lower achievement (Levine & Levine, 1986). Improving the quality of personal relationships in the schools also improves achievement. Sound efforts to raise achievement scores would improve school climate, staff morale, and public confidence (Wayson, DeVoss, Kaeser, Lasley & Pinnel, 1982; Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell & Landis, 1988a; Wayson, Achilles, Pinnell, Cunningham, Carol & Lintz, 1988b), but not all advocates of effective schools promote practices that will attain any of those results (Ralph & Fennessey, 1983).

6. *The guidelines promote authoritarian techniques and purposes.* Test-centered practices foster authoritarianism (Clark & Astuto, 1985). Stressing "strong leadership in the principal's office," the need for clear and controlling purposes, and the need for frequent monitoring imposes much control over teachers and students, especially if administrators are naive or insen-

sitive (Levine & Levine, 1986). These forms of control are not closely associated with greater achievement (Keedy, 1987; Keedy & Faucette, 1987-88; Rallis & Highsmith, 1986). Certainly, the administrator-leader becomes more participative as the staff demonstrates more skill and commitment. One result, reported by High & Achilles (1986), was that as achievement increased over time, principals relaxed control and turned it over to teachers.

7. *The programs encourage manipulating data to show results.* Excessive stress on standardized achievement scores combined with public competition to raise test scores among schools in a district or region provides incentives for cheating in both subtle and blatant ways (Murphy, 1985). Test scores can be raised without increased student learning; consequently, good school programs promote authentic commitment to educational outcomes that include, but go beyond, test scores. Test scores should rise as an incidental concomitant of intensive efforts to help a greater range or students learn fully and completely; but, increased student learning does not automatically occur from concentration on test scores (Wayson et al., 1988a).

Pronouncements and policies based on the effective schools research put the principal in charge of the agenda for educational reform. One government official (Finn, 1984), then writing in his private capacity, identified instructional leadership by the principal as one of the commandments for bringing about effectiveness in all public schools, not just those in urban areas. Recently, the U. S. Department of Education (1986) issued, with great fanfare and an express endorsement from President Reagan (Fiske, 1986), a booklet entitled *What Works: Research About Teaching and Learning* that unequivocally listed "strong instructional leadership" as one of the most important characteristics of effective schools (p. 45).

Research-based prescriptions have great allure. They seem to confirm the simple, common-sense notion that the great school principal is indeed principal in making the school great. The "principal principle" (Eisner, 1981, p. 59) has been endorsed widely without regard to limitations in the underlying research. Purkey and Smith (1983) concluded "[we] are suspicious of the 'great principal' theory," (p. 443) after their extensive review of the research. Relying too strongly upon the strong principal as a solution to school problems ignores the limitations in and warnings about the early research and seems to ignore the findings of more recent research (Clark & Astuto, 1985; Stedman, 1987). It may also reflect the current top-down organization of schools which inhibits change or improvement as well (Cuban, 1984; Wayson et al., 1988a). Although programs for preparing school administrators must deal with all of the factors that contribute to students' learning, the research on effective leadership may be particularly informative for professors of educational administration.

Chapter
3

Research on the Leadership Factor[1]

Most early studies of effective schools were limited to elementary schools in urban areas and were characterized by small sample sizes. The measurement of strong leadership was not systematic. A substantial number of the studies used a case study approach, one that is appropriate for exploration rather than generalization, and limited their examination to effective schools only. Even those studies that statistically compared effective schools (positive outliers) with ineffective or average schools (negative outliers) were not consistent in terms of the type of negative outliers, the control of student background differences, and the inclusion of the leadership variable. As Sweeny (1982) admitted in his efforts to synthesize them, findings with respect to the leadership variable were not conclusive. For example, the Maryland study (Austin, 1978) concluded that effective schools had principals who exercised strong instructional leadership, while the Delaware study (Spartz, Vales, McCormick, Myers & Geppert, 1977) found that effective schools had principals who emphasized administrative activities (see also Fallis & Highsmith, 1986). In a review of 59 systematic case studies, McCarthy (1980) found the principal's leadership identified as important to school success in only 27 percent of the studies. Some of those studies emphasized content and others stressed process.

The emphasis on instructional leadership was found in only three of the seven studies reviewed by Purkey and Smith (1982, 1983), and in some cases it was attributable to staff members other than the principal (Hall, 1987). The Phi Delta Kappa Commission on Discipline (1982) found that "the principal plays a key role" (p. 22) but in some schools the programs resulted from the principal's "teamwork [with] some other staff member who has personal leadership qualities that complement those of the principal" (p. 24). The schools reportedly had "people work together to solve problems" (p. 31) and "to reduce authority and status differences among all persons in the school" (p. 32). Similar working relationships were found

in schools with high achievement (Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell, Landis, *Excellence*, 1988, Chapter 8-9) and in schools with high levels of public confidence (Wayson, Achilles, Pinnell, Cunningham, Carol, & Lintz, *Confidence*, 1988, Chapter 6).

Rowan, Bossert, and Dwyer (1983; see also Bossert, 1985) expressed cautions as to causation specific to the leadership variable, noting that the relationship between student achievement and instructional leadership may be due to effective organizations attracting or molding effective leaders rather than to effective leaders bringing about their organizations' effectiveness. Murphy, Hallinger, and Mitman (1983) similarly warned against the "white knight" (p. 301) view of educational leadership and the premature application of related research. Yudof (1984) warned that educational policy based on the early research is built on "shifting sands" (p. 459). More recent research about the leadership factor shows his warning to be well-founded.

A second wave of studies focusing on the relationship between school and principal effectiveness was reported in the mid 1980s. These specialized studies have not usually been included in syntheses of the applicable research base (Zirkel, 1987). In general, they are more advanced than the earlier studies in several respects, including comparisons among schools, control for background variables, and more precise measurement of the principal's leadership.

In his study of 54 middle schools in Missouri, Ayres (1984) found that the correlation between principal effectiveness (as measured by the overall scores of the Audit of Principal Effectiveness), and student achievement (as measured by gain scores during grades seven and eight on standardized achievement tests), was not statistically significant. Similarly, he found no significant difference in the overall principals' effectiveness scores between the schools with the highest average student gain scores and those with the lowest average student gain scores. Some subscores of the principals' effectiveness instrument (e.g., directional leadership, instructional management, and affective involvement), however, were related to student gain.

In his study of twenty-eight suburban schools, Mack (1984) found that principals' expectations for and role consistency with teachers were not significantly related to student reading achievement scores, student reading attitude scores, percentage of students above grade level in reading, or teacher perceived school effectiveness. Moreover, although principals as an average, rated their efforts to assist teachers as moderate, their increased effort was inversely related to teacher-perceived school effectiveness. Finally, what principals actually do, according to teachers and principals in the same school, was inversely related to teacher-perceived school effectiveness.

In her study of principals in eighteen elementary schools in one urban community, Adie (1986) found that those principals' expectations and their behaviors were not significantly related to student reading achievement. LaMarr (1986) found that instructional leadership was not significantly related to student achievement in an urban district. Measurements included the principals' self ratings, their supervisors' ratings on the *Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire*, and also their 1982-83 evaluations. Student achievement in the schools where principals' ratings were above

the mean was significantly less than the student achievement in the schools where principals' ratings were below the mean on the 1982-1983 evaluation instrument.

Three separately designed and conducted studies in Pennsylvania, all using statewide achievement data adjusted for differences in student background and various other "condition variables," reached surprisingly similar conclusions. Martinez-Antonetty (1985) found no significant differences between ten effective and ineffective middle and junior high schools with respect to the instructional leadership, leadership style, and sources of authority of the principals, based on structured interviews with a cross section of each school staff (principal, assistant principal, teachers, and nonprofessionals). Matula, in his study of 35 schools (1986), found no significant differences in administrative styles between effective and ineffective high schools (as measured by the achievement scores of eleventh grade students). Principals' instructional style was measured by both self-ratings and teacher ratings on Blake and Mouton's *Managerial Grid*. Landis (1987), in a study of 25 schools—13 effective and 12 ineffective—found no significant difference between overall principals' leadership (as measured by a comprehensive teacher rating scale) in effective and ineffective middle schools (as measured by the achievement scores of eighth grade students). He found significant differences favoring the effective schools for two subscores (goal commitment and decision making) and favoring the ineffective schools for three subscores (monitoring, routines, and resourcefulness). One of the remaining six subscales, that did not yield significant differences, was a scale he labeled "instructional leadership."

In her study of nineteen schools in a single suburban district, O'Day (1985) found a significant relationship not only between teacher ratings of principal instructional management and positive discrepancy scores (between actual and expected student achievement), but also between self-ratings of principal instructional management and negative discrepancy scores for academic achievement. In a national study of effective secondary schools, as determined by a national panel based on their programs, policies, and practices, Huddle (1986) concluded that no one leadership style predominated. Grimsley (1986) found that the "Machiavellian orientation" of the principal was not significantly related to school effectiveness, defined as the health of the organization. Patterson (1985) found no differences between effective and ineffective principals, as nominated by supervisors in the 88 participating California school districts, with regard to their survey responses to 7 common situations related to student achievement.[2]

Recent studies are not limited to doctoral dissertations. In a study that is part of the Seattle Effective Schools Project, Andrews, Soder, and Jacoby (1986) divided 33 elementary schools into 3 groups—strong leader, average leader, and weak leader—based on the ratings of the principals by the teachers in each school on the Staff Assessment Questionnaire. Schools in each group were comparable in size, ethnicity, and surrogate SES. There were no significant differences among the three groups of schools with respect to mean scores on academic achievement. However, there were significant differences in achievement gain scores (over a two-year period) among the three groups of schools, favoring the schools administered by principals who were rated by their teachers as strong instructional leaders.

In a study that is part of the Louisiana School Effectiveness Study, Wimpelberg (1986) identified nine pairs of "more effective" and "less effective" schools that were geographically, ethnically, and economically representative of that state's population of public schools. The criterion for selecting more and less effective schools was mean reading achievement scores adjusted for SES and ethnicity. Data were available and analyzed for six pairs of schools. He found that the Likert-type responses for the item "I am able to monitor instruction very closely" did not differ significantly between principals in the "more effective" schools and principals in the "less effective" schools. However, in the follow-up responses during the interviews, he reported detecting a difference in "the flavor with which the principals described their involvement in the classroom" (p. 7).

A group of other recent studies demonstrates a mixed array of terminology and results. In a study of 88 California elementary school districts, Glasman (1984) found no significant differences between principals designated by their superintendents as "most" and "least" effective with regard to their own perceived sense of efficacy in the use of data on gains in student achievement. In successive studies of elementary and secondary schools in a Southeastern state, Moody and Amos (1984, 1986-87) found that principals in high achieving elementary schools had significantly higher total mean scores on a group interaction instrument than did principals in low achieving elementary schools; however, there was no significant difference in the corresponding analysis for secondary school principals. The study did not control for student background characteristics.

In their study of nine schools in a school effectiveness project in an urban district in the Midwest, High and Achilles (1986) found mixed results with regard to differences in "influence-gaining behaviors" between principals in high-achieving schools and those in "other" schools depending on the source of the ratings (teachers, principals, observers) and the nature of the response options (rank v. degree).

On balance, research evidence weighs as much against as for the notion that great principals make great schools. Contradiction in the evidence about the leadership factor has given rise to several possible explanations and numerous questions. In view of the seeming contradictions in research relating to the leadership factor, an examination of the terms "effective schools" and "effective principals" is in order.

Effective Schools

What is an effective school? Most researchers would seem to agree that academic achievement is the criterion. However, a few (e.g., Grimsley, 1986) remind us that a "natural systems" theory, which focuses on organizational health or climate, has arisen as an alternative to the "goals-centered" theory, which focuses on student academic achievement (Lezotte, 1982; Rowan, 1985). The definitions, measures, and results of effective schools research often vary according to the guiding theory of the evaluator (Rowan, 1985; see also Bossert, 1988; Cohen, 1987).

Even within the goals-centered approach, it is at least arguable that measures of affective, as well as, cognitive student outcomes should be included (Stedman, 1985; 1987). Academic achievement in basic skills may well be a necessary, but not

sufficient, operational definition of effectiveness (Borkow, 1982). Further, within the cognitive area, it is not at all clear whether the measurement should be norm-referenced or criterion-referenced and whether it should be limited, particularly in the upper grades, to basic skills in reading and math. Even if one accepts that the tests should be criterion-referenced and limited to basic skills, the studies vary as to whether the criterion should be mean scores or gain scores. The latter are used much less frequently but perhaps much more appropriately (e.g., Andrews, Soder & Jacoby, 1986; Ayres, 1985). Similarly, the studies differ as to whether these scores should be analyzed as is or with adjustment for condition variables, such as SES. The preferable answer would appear to be the latter, but some studies (e.g., Moody & Amos, 1984, 1986-87) have not employed this approach and the Edmonds/Lezotte group denounce such adjustments (Brookover, 1988; Lezotte, 1982). Adjustments, of course, raise the possibility that a disadvantaged school with below-average student achievement could be classified as effective and a highly advantaged school with above-average scores could be ineffective. Indeed, such conditions would be expected if a school's effectiveness is judged by "value added" criteria.

Rowan (1985) pointed out additional variations and problems, including his finding that, using regression analysis, "only 50 percent of the schools identified [by gain scores] as effective in one year remained effective the next year" (p. 110). Rowan, Bossert, and Dwyer (1983) also found that "the school-to-school differences in achievement that emerge when extreme outliers are compared are confounded with differences due to random error" (p. 27). Mandeville (1986) similarly found methodological problems and inherent inconsistency of improvement, leading to his conclusion that many unsolved problems still exist in identifying effective schools. Rowan (1984) has likened attributions to effective schools research as "shamanistic rituals." For these and other reasons, Kyle (1985) reminds us that "We tend sometimes to forget the obvious: phrases such as 'effective school' . . . can become mere incantations masking different perceptions of what effective schools really are" (p. 6).

Effective Principals

Kyle's caveat can be extended to "instructional leadership" and the variations on this term that are used in the research, often without clear definition. The dramatic diversity that is masked by the common term is revealed by looking at the literature (see Pitner, 1988; Duckworth & Carnine, 1987). For example, in a review of articles about the school principalship since the early 1950s, Glasman (1984) found that instructional leadership was only one of the several value-laden role definitions and that none of these definitions viewed the principal as directly responsible for improving student achievement.

As a more recent example, Pitner and Hocevar (1986) found support for a multidimensional conception of principal leadership, which does not appear to be adequately measured by relying on teachers as the sole data source. In the popular literature, Finn (1986) referred to the research but redefined the role of the principal as executive and entrepreneur rather than as instructional expert. Several observers

question whether one person can serve all the purposes (Keedy, 1987; Rallis & Highsmith, 1986).

Diversity is also evident in the instruments used to assess leadership. The instruments vary significantly in scope, type, and source. As reviewed earlier, these methods included case studies, the use of the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire, Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid, correlational design, and rating scales. Some have a broad scope, looking at leadership generally; others focus on instructional leadership. Some are systematically quantitative or qualitative; others are impressionistic observations or interviews. Some rely on responses from the principal; others use teachers or observers. For example, some of the effective schools studies (High & Achilles, 1986; O'Day, 1985) and some research in related area (Georgia, 1986; Kersten & Sloan, 1986-87) found significant differences between principals' and teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership. Similarly, Wimpelberg (1986) reached different conclusions based on the quantitative and qualitative parts of his instrument. Likewise, some studies (e.g., Landis, 1986) obtained dramatically different findings depending on the subscale of the instrument. Collectively, such differences would seem to account partially for the variance in the results.

Further, rather than the list of indicators constituting each instrument, instructional leadership undoubtedly is multidimensional, involving the interplay of personal traits, leadership styles, management behaviors, and contextual factors (De Bevoise, 1984). For example, ignoring differences between elementary and secondary schools is at least as problematic for measuring instructional leadership as it is for measuring academic achievement. Some researchers (Firestone & Herriott, 1982; Herriott & Firestone, 1984; Moody & Amos, 1984, 1986-87) suggest that elementary-secondary context may be a significant intervening variable, although it does not appear to be the primary explanation for variation between the results of the early and recent research.

Even if instructional leadership, or some identifiable attribute thereof, is a consistent correlate of effective schools, policy makers should be cautious about their conclusions and actions. First the absence of multivariate, longitudinal research prohibits inferences about effect or causation. Second, ranking the leadership factor and its interaction with other factors has not been explored. Finally, some researchers (De Bevoise, 1984; Fullan, 1983; Gersten, Carnine & Green, 1982; Keedy & Faucette, 1987-88; Purkey & Smith, 1983) conclude that leadership may be supplied by other members of the school staff. In sum, as Cohen (1983, p. 31) noted: "Research on what principals actually do, and on the consequences . . . for student learning, is still in its infancy."

In light of the marked limitations of the early research and the mixed effects of the more recent research, broad characterizations of such findings as being "consistent, persuasive, and fairly stable over time" (U. S. Department of Education, 1986, p. 1) are glaring overstatements. Pronouncements in the form of administrative policy frameworks or judicially enforceable mandates that rely on this research base are not justifiable. Similarly, academic plans and prescriptions that claim to be "research based" (e.g., Squires, Huitt & Segars, 1983) proceed by ignoring or minimizing "noteworthy shortcomings" (in the research) (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan & Lee, 1982, p. 39).

The situation cries for balance. Research should not be ignored or abandoned because it is imperfect (see Duckworth & Carnine, 1987; Cohen, 1987; Bossert, 1988). Rather it merits cautious assessment combined with recognition of the need for continued improvement. Advocacy and activism have their place, but not when the "rhetoric of reform" poses under the "guise of positive science" (Ralph & Fennessey, 1983, p. 693; also Wayson et al., 1988, Chapter 8). Finally, policy makers should be wary of creating false expectations for principals or their schools.

"Effective" is a politically loaded word. When used to characterize schools or principals, the watchword "effective" may attract requirements rather than attracting resources (Purkey & Smith, 1982, p. 67). For example, Finn's recent proposal (Finn, 1986) includes holding principals personally accountable for the performance of their schools, particularly in terms of student achievement. If a principal does not produce high student achievement, however, it may well be caused by organizational or personnel factors or by limitations in the "state of the art" of education or of research. Whether schools are loosely coupled or not (Cohen, 1983; Deal & Celotte, 1980; Murphy, Hallinger & Mesa, 1985; Weick, 1982), the principal is a full-step removed from the complex teacher-student connection, which in itself is built on a limited, albeit improving, research base (see Rallis & Highsmith, 1986; Keedy, 1987).

We join others, from Edmonds (1982) to Sirotnik (1985) to Stedman (1987), who have called for caution, healthy skepticism, and inquiry into the complexity of schooling. At the same time, practitioners must act, and they cannot wait for a definitive research base to show the way. They must blend artistry with science as they conduct their craft (Blumberg, 1980) paying attention to some of the best-odds relationships pointed out in this manuscript, being open to the results of continuing and further research, and proceeding experimentally and with caution to develop and implement effective administrative practices.

Chapter 4

Recommendations

This review of the research on effective schools has a number of implications for the preparation of educational administrators and programs in educational administration. The following four recommendations are offered. The effective schools literature should serve as a preliminary data base. Future administrators should have a vision and be able to identify goals for their schools. Preparation programs should prepare administrators to be able to assess school effectiveness based on school goals. Future administrators should be confident and capable of assessing effectiveness in their organizations and reviewing research findings.

The first recommendation is to use the effective schools and effective principals research as a preliminary data base. Since preparation programs must be experimental because of inadequate theory and lack of definitive research, the programs should start with viable hypotheses, then implement and test them. Probably no better sources for those hypotheses can be found than the extensive literature reporting and criticizing research of effective schools, effective principals, and school improvement. Although the research is not definitive, it does provide a starting point for understanding what preparation will benefit future administrators.

The effective schools and the effective principals research provides guidelines that might improve preparation programs, enhance leadership in schools of all types, and promote better public education. So far, no evidence suggests that, when applied with due regard for the criticisms that have been raised, such guidelines would be less fruitful than what is currently done or that they would be harmful to the conduct of schools (see discussion by Cohen, 1987 and by Duckworth & Carnine, 1987).

Bossert, says that the effective schools research provides a "glimmer of hope for changing school effectiveness" (1988). While faulting the research for not providing conceptual linkage between important structural elements, he declares that:

> These problems do not suggest that findings from the effectiveness studies should be ignored. The cumulative evidence, as well as the practical

> experience of educators, supports the importance of having high expectations for students, developing a positive school climate, improving instruction and demonstrating leadership. These are necessary but probably not sufficient elements of effective instructional management. (p. 347)

Thus we return to our earlier caveat—effective schools research should be used with caution and experimentally.

The second recommendation, that future administrators should have a vision and be able to identify the goals for their schools, requires administrators to be able to select programs and innovations based on school goals. The fact that the effective schools movement swept this country so rapidly may be a cause for concern. This may imply that there are no differences in the schools of this country. It may also imply that administrators do not have clear goals or visions for their schools. The widespread adoption of effective schools programs appears to reflect a search for a formula. The search for a formula to solve school problems ignores the complexity of the educational enterprise. This search is evident at the national level as well as the local level. Recommendations based on effective schools research have even been disseminated by the U. S. Department of Education in the publication *What Works: Research About Teaching and Learning* (1986). Only when administrators have a clear vision of the goals of their schools can they choose means of achieving the goals. Future administrators should be able to select programs and innovations based on recognized goals.

The third recommendation is to prepare administrators to measure the effectiveness of their schools and their programs. Administrators need to be able to determine if school goals are being met. Thus, programs in educational administration should be designed to help future administrators create monitoring processes that contribute to continual improvement in organizational and instructional features and instructional outcomes.

The effective schools movement has demonstrated how eager school administrators are to adopt any practice that holds promise for addressing school problems. In many ways it may also demonstrate that, when they lack conceptual and professional capability for addressing school improvement, they are quick to embrace new ideas but are unable to assess the value, applicability, goodness, and worth of what they have embraced.

In learning to measure effectiveness, administrators need to know how to interpret test data and be able to identify problem areas in those data. They should know the limitations of standardized testing and be able to analyze their schools from multiple perspectives using multiple measures. They will need the skill to evaluate school climate and culture, including the ability to identify the informal norms that govern behavior and sentiments in the school. They should be able to develop means for assessing their own effectiveness as school leaders. They will also need to have the ability to assess the appropriateness and applicability of innovations to their organizations.

Fourth, students must be prepared to use research and conduct assessment in the

schools. Administrators need to be able to assess the research base for programs such as the Effective Schools movement. University instruction in educational research should prepare administrators to use research skills in an educational organization in a confident, competent manner. Administrators should be able to conduct action research related to the practical aspects of school administration. Research preparation should prepare the administrator for a lifetime quest for school effectiveness.

Administrators must be able to read research reports so that they are not the victims of fads and entrepreneurial hucksters. Administrators must be informed consumers of educational research. The success of workshops on Effective Schools points to a profession of administrators who are desperate for assistance in managing schools, but who may not be able to determine appropriate methods for achieving school goals.

Administrators attempting to establish effective school practices should be able to engage in careful action research in the schools. This research should proceed from the identified school goals and employ measures of effectiveness based on those goals. Administrators need to be confident of their skills to read research findings and to conduct practical research in their schools. These skills will allow administrators to measure school effectiveness and reach school goals.

Students must be able to use whatever research is available or to test out whatever experience and intuition exists to guide curriculum and instruction. Future administrators should be able to read and to evaluate research concerning educational innovations. They must have at least minimal skills to evaluate research designs and processes combined with the ability to relate the content of the research reports to philosophic, psychological, and sociological tenets about learning and schooling.

Preparation in these areas will permit future administrators to make greater strides toward creating effective schools. Skills in goal setting, measuring effectiveness, and action research will be enduring benefits of an administrator preparation program, enabling administrators to engage confidently and competently in school improvement.

Notes

1. A portion of this chapter appeared as Effective Schools and Effective Principals: Effective Research?, *Teachers College Record, 89*(2), 255-267.

2. One shortcoming of using dissertation studies in research is gaining access to the actual dissertations. In this review, reliance on the information available in the dissertation abstract was necessary when the dissertations were not accessible.

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